

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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R 201430Z FEB 74

FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3160

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

UNCLAS JOHANNESBURG 0182

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SF

SUBJ: FIRST-HAND REPORT ON BASOTHO-XHOSA MINE CLASHES IN
ORANGE FREE STATE

REF: STATE 181, DATED FEB 20, 1974

RAND DAILY MAIL PRINTED FOLLOWING BACKGROUND STORY FILLED BY
ON-THE-SPOT REPORTER IN FEBRUARY 20 EDITION:

QTE BY YESTERDAY AFTERNOON 19 MINERS HADDIED IN THE LAST 10
DAYS AS BASOTHO AND XHOSA TURNED THREE FREE STATE GOLDMINES
INTO BATTLEFIELDS. NEITHER TRIBE HAS ANY IDEA WHAT ALL THE
FIGHTING IS ABOUT-- BOTH SAY THEY MUST DEFEND IF THE OTHER
ATTACKS. . .

QTE THE BASOTHO-XHOSA FIGHT HAS SPREAD TO THREE OF ANGLO-
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AMERICAN'S SEVEN MINES IN THE FREE STATE, LEAVING 19 DEAD AND

287 INJURED.

QTE BY NO-ONE KNOWS WHY THE TWO TRIBES ARE FIGHTING.

QTE AS THE WELKOM CID'S CHIEF INVESTIGATING OFFICER PUT IT, 'I DON'T KNOW WHY THEY'RE BEATING EACH OTHER TO DEATH, MANAGEMENT DOESN'T KNOW, AND I'M DAMN SURE THEY DON'T KNOW THEMSELVES'.

QTE EVERYONE, THE BASOTHO, THE XHOSA AND THE WHITES, HAVE ONLY PRAISE FOR THE POLICE.

QTE WHEN THE OPPOSING FACTIONS START FORMING UP IN BATTLE ARRAY AND CHANTING, THE POLICE, ARMED WITH STENGUNS, FN AUTOMATIC RIFLES, 303S AND TEARGAS, ARE QUICK TO ACT.

QTE THE WHITE MINERS HOPE--AND BELIEVE--THE FIGHTING IS OVER, BUT THE SPORADIC WARCHANTING AND THE SOUND OF POINTED STICKS BEING WHITTLED DOWN MAKES THEM UNEASY.

QTE THE GENERAL MANAGERS, UNDERGROUND MANAGERS, HOSTILE MANAGERS AND MINE CAPTAINS OF THE THREE MINES HAVEN'T SLEPT SINCE THE TROUBLE ERUPTED.

QTE THE MANAGERS ARE NOT ONLY WORRIED ABOUT THE LOSS OF LIFE AND THE DAMAGE TO PROPERTY. PRODUCTION IS OF COURSE SERIOUSLY AFFECTED.

QTE THERE ARE NO TREES LEFT IN THE ENCLOSED HOSTELS ON ALL THREE MINES--THEY HAVE BEEN USED TO MAKE KNOBKIERIES AND SHARP POINTED STICKS.

HE BOTH TRIBES ARE BEWILDERED.

QTE 'IF THE MA'XHOSA ATTACK MY BROTHERS I MUST FIGHT BACK, M'LUNGU,' THE BASOTHO TELL THEIR HOSTEL MANAGERS.

QTE 'WHEN THE BASOTHO FIGHT ME I MUST FIGHT HIM,' SAY THE XHOSA.

QTE NONE OF THE MEN SEEM TO WANT TO FIGHT. BUT THEY WILL NOT LET THEIR SIDE DOWN IF THE OTHER SIDE THREATENS.

QTE TEN THOUSAND BASOTHO AND 500 XHOSA HAVE LEFT THE MINE AND GONE HOME TO LESOTHO OR THE TRANSKEI.

QTE POLICE ARE STANDING BY AT ALL HOSTELS OF THE THREE MINES. THEIR BIGGEST PROBLEM IS NOT KNOWING WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT.

QTE THIS IS HOW THE TROUBLE SPREAD:

QTE TROUBLE STARTED ON SATURDAY NIGHT FEBRUARY 9, AT THE WELKOM GOLD MINING COMPANY. THE FINAL TOLL OF THE CLASHES, WHICH LASTED UNTIL MONDAY AFTERNOON, WAS 10 DEAD AND OVER 100 INJURED. THIRTY ARE STILL IN HOSPITAL.

QTE THE MINE'S TOTAL WORKFORCE IS 10,000 OF WHICH 4,000 BASOTHO HAVE GONE HOME.

QTE A WEEK LATER, WESTERN HOLDINGS MINE HAD TROUBLE.
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QTE AT ABOUT 9PM ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16, THE FIRST CLASH KILLED THREE MINERS AT THE NO. 2 SHAFT HOSTEL.

QTE POLIC MOVED IN AND THE ATMOSPHERE REMAINED TENSE, BUT THERE WAS NO MORE FIGHTING UNTIL SUNDAY AFTERNOON, WHEN BASOTHO AND XHOSA REPRESENTATIVES MET THE MANAGEMENT AND DECIDED TO SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES.

QTE HOWEVER, THERE WAS ANOTHER CLASH EARLY THAT NIGHT. NO ONE WAS KILLED AND NO. 2 SHAFT HOSTEL SETTLED DOWN.

QTE ON MONDAY MORNING 1,500 BASOTHO LEFT FOR HOME, AND IN THE AFTERNOON ANOTHER CLASH LEFT ONE DEAD.

QTE MEANWHILE, AT NO. 3 HOSTEL TROUBLE HAD STARTED ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON WHEN THREE MEN WERE BEATEN TO DEATH AND 60 WERE INJURED. NO MORE TROUBLE OCCURRED AT NO 3, AND THEN XHOSAS OF NO. 2 AND NO.3 SWAPPED HOSTELS.

QTE AT NO. 1 SHAFT HOSTEL THERE HAD BEEN NO DISTURBANCES, EXCEPT ON MONDAY NIGHT WHEN THE TWO FACTIONS DREW UP IN FORMATION OPPOSITE EACH OTHER, CHANTING WAR SONGS--BUT THERE WAS NO FIGHTING.

QTE BUT AT 6AM YESTERDAY, ONE MAN WAS KILLED IN A CLASH, AND 32 WERE INJURED, EVEN THOUGH POLICE WERE ON HAND, ALL BASOTHO HAVE NOW BEEN MOVED OUT OF NO. 1 HOSTEL.

QTE AT FREE STATE GEDULD MINE, THE LAST TO BE AFFECTED, DISTURBANCES STARTED ON SUNDAY NIGHT AT NO. 4 AND NO. 2 SHAFT HOSTELS.

QTE ONE MINER WAS KILLED, AND 42 WERE HURT. THE NORMAL WORKFORCE OF THE MINE IS 10,000 AND 4,500 BASOTHO AND 500 XHOSA HAVE GONE HOME.

QTE ON MONDAY THERE WAS NO PRODUCTION. YESTERDAY MINERS WENT DOWN ALL THREE SHAFTS. UNQTE.

DEGRACE

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